



Cleveland Museum of Natural History Finishes Top 5 in USA TODAY's 10Best New Museums

National recognition places the Museum among the top new cultural destinations in the country

CLEVELAND, OH—January 21, 2026—For the first time, the Cleveland Museum of Natural History has been named one of the top 5 Best New Museums in the United States, finishing #4 overall in USA TODAY's [2026 10Best Readers' Choice Awards](#).

The national recognition follows the completion of the Museum's visionary transformation and places Cleveland alongside the country's most innovative and impactful new cultural destinations. Readers' Choice winners were determined through a combination of expert panel nominations and public voting, highlighting institutions that are redefining the museum experience through design, sustainability, and community engagement.

"Earning a top 5 national ranking is an extraordinary honor for the Museum," said Sonia Winner, President & CEO of the Cleveland Museum of Natural History. "Our transformation was guided by a commitment to science, sustainability, and community impact, and we're proud to see that reflected on a national stage."

USA TODAY's [10Best New Museums category](#) recognizes recently opened museums and major transformations from across the country, spanning art, science, history, and cultural institutions. The Cleveland Museum of Natural History was selected by a panel of editors and museum experts as one of the nation's most compelling new museum experiences.

Since its Grand Opening in December 2024, the transformed Museum has emerged as an international model for forward-thinking museum design and environmental stewardship. The expanded campus features immersive, story-driven galleries and sustainability-forward infrastructure which has earned the Museum a [LEED Platinum certification](#), the highest level of green building achievement.

The USA TODAY recognition adds to a growing list of accolades earned in the past year, including international distinction on the [2025 World's Most Beautiful Museums](#) List by Prix Versailles. The



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Museum was also named Overall Winner of the Ohio 2030 District's [Green Building Challenge](#), reflecting its commitment to environmental stewardship and energy efficiency. Its excellence in the museum field earned the distinction of [Institution of the Year](#) by the Ohio Museums Association, while families across Northeast Ohio voted it [Best Museum to Visit With Your Family](#) through *Northeast Ohio Parent* magazine. These achievements have positioned the Museum as a model for how institutions across the globe can foster environmental awareness, scientific literacy, and community engagement.

“This top 5 finish is not just a national win—it’s a win for Cleveland,” Winner added. “It underscores the Museum’s role as a cultural anchor, scientific leader, and place where curiosity about our world comes to life.”

About the Cleveland Museum of Natural History

The Cleveland Museum of Natural History illuminates the world around us and inspires visitors to engage with the natural forces that shape their lives. Since its founding in 1920, the Museum has pioneered scientific research to advance knowledge across diverse fields of study and used its outstanding collections, which encompass millions of artifacts and specimens, to deepen the public’s understanding of the dynamic connections between humans and nature. Through its Natural Areas Program, the Museum stewards more than 12,500 acres of protected ecosystems across northern Ohio. A community gathering place, educational center, and research institution, the Museum is a vital resource that serves Cleveland and the nation. For more information, visit CMNH.org.

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